



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

A DECADE OF PROGRESS IN TRAINING RURAL TEACHERS

ERNEST BURNHAM
Western Michigan Normal School

The National Education Association Committee of Twelve on Rural Schools pointed out in 1895 that normal schools were originally intended to prepare teachers of the rural common schools, but were doing little for these schools, and explained that entrance requirements had risen rapidly and thus set the normal schools too far ahead of those whom they were intended to serve; that many rural teachers could not afford the expense of two years in the normal schools; that salaries did not remunerate for such expense; and that attendance at normal schools is in inverse ratio to the distance between these schools and the homes, a fact especially true of short courses.

This committee suggested summer terms for rural teachers in every normal school in the United States and the use of agricultural colleges and high schools, with model and practice rooms attached, as supplementary sources. The Committee on Industrial Education in Schools for Rural Communities ten years later, in 1905, added the suggestion that the compulsory introduction of industrial subjects must not outrun the preparation of teachers in such subjects.

These fundamental considerations and the constantly revived ideal of a teacher as an individual of personality, education, and specific training have formed the foundation for such institutional evolution as has characterized the progress of the past decade in training rural teachers.

A satisfactory contrast between the conditions which existed ten years ago and the present situation is impossible, because what was being done then was not a matter of particular record. In *Bulletin No. 49*, 1914, on "Efficiency and Preparation of Rural School Teachers," in the forthcoming bulletin on "Rural Teacher

Training in Secondary Schools," and in a special chapter in the annual report, the federal Bureau of Education is making available a specific record of the present situation, thus insuring a trustworthy point of departure for future inventories of progress.

In a questionnaire study conducted during the past three months, out of 18 state departments of education responding to the inquiries 16 were doing no special work in high schools or in county training classes to prepare rural teachers ten years ago, and 12 out of 20 state departments reported no special work for rural teachers in normal schools at that time. The same states reported that at present out of 18 there are 11 which have special courses in high schools and 4 which have special county training classes for rural teachers while 20 out of 21 states reported special efforts by their state normal schools to prepare rural teachers. These items show in the past decade an approximate advance of 450 per cent in the use of high schools, of 100 per cent in the use of county training classes, and of 140 per cent in the use of state normal schools for the training of rural teachers.

This same research revealed that 6 out of 18 states have not advanced the minimum requirements for beginning teachers in ten years, while 4 out of 18 have advanced the certification requirement academically and 8 out of 18 have added an entrance requirement of professional training. Twenty state departments of education show that a median estimate of 15 per cent of rural teachers had some professional training in 1905 and a median estimate of 50 per cent of rural teachers had some professional training in 1915, an advance of 230 per cent. A comparative study of several hundred state statutes on education passed in 1905 and a comparable number of the statutes of 1915 showed a shift in emphasis from the certification to the preparation of rural teachers.

In a questionnaire research directed to state normal schools, out of 38 states responding 29 offer special courses for rural teachers and 9 do not; 3 began to differentiate courses for rural teachers before 1905, 6 between 1905 and 1910, and 20 have begun such differentiation since 1910, while 7 have begun in the current year. Out of 35 states 28 responded that differentiation is increasing, while

29 out of 36 states offered evidence that there is a demand by local school authorities for specially prepared rural teachers.

Seventeen of 36 states had normal-school courses for rural supervisors and superintendents in 1905, and 29 of 36 states had such courses this year, a gain of 70 per cent. Nine of 30 states had courses for rural supervisors and superintendents in higher institutions of learning in 1905, and 21 out of 30 states have these courses now, a gain of 130 per cent. The results of the two questionnaire studies are presented for what they are worth as approximations of the facts.

State normal-school activities in training rural teachers in the year 1913-14, as summarized by the federal Bureau of Education, showed: out of 121 normal schools reporting, 36 have distinct departments for rural teachers; 19 others offer special courses, although not equipped with distinct departments; 28 offer instruction in some subjects for rural teachers separate from general courses; while 41 of 121 normal schools make no special provision for rural teachers. The 1914 report of the United States Commissioner of Education mentions one state which had 7,000 rural teachers attending summer schools in 1914, and reports one state teachers' college which has established 50 student centers to enrol 3,000 active teachers for Saturday instruction.

The foregoing paragraphs clearly indicate the types of institutional agencies which have emerged as the training of rural teachers has progressed. These types are the high-school training course, the county training class, the department of rural education in state normal schools, and courses, mostly for advanced students, in such higher institutions, as agricultural and teachers' colleges and schools of education in universities.

Progress within the high-school and county-class types turns upon practically the same considerations, namely: financial resources, entrance and completion requirements, academic and professional content of courses, articulation with the school system, and the selection of qualified instructors. The local classes are now subsidized by the states or by the states and counties to the amount of \$500 to \$1,500 annually for each class. Entrance requirements are now two, and in most cases three, years of high-school

work completed, and many high-school graduates are already enrolled. In one state, after September, 1917, the requirement for admission will be the completion of a four-year approved high-school course. The one year of work is distributed among academic reviews of the elementary-school subjects, courses in psychology, management and method illuminated by observation and practice, and special instruction including method in the content subjects recently introduced in the rural-school curriculum.

Articulation with the school system involves adequate provision for observation and practice, the definite evaluation of the year's work for use as entrance or advance credit at normal schools and universities, and the appointment of the graduates to teaching positions. Such progress as is reported in these respects does not lend itself readily to a summary. The preparation of the instructors employed in these local teacher-training agencies exhibits variety and wide disparity. Some instructors have had but one year beyond the high school; the majority are state normal-school graduates, and some have completed four or more years of work in teachers' colleges and universities. The selection and training, including the inspiration, retention, and adequate remuneration of the instructors of these local seed-beds of rural teachers, is a sensitive and promising point of progress at present.

Departments of rural education in state normal schools are a growth of the past decade. A purpose to serve rural education has no doubt always characterized the attitude of most state normal schools, but an easier, more responsive, and expanding field was immediately at hand in the urban schools. However, the ideas of wider social service which have been incorporated in the work of all public institutions in the past quarter of a century have inspired normal schools to attempt to create and foster proper local demands in regard to teacher preparation, even while devoting their main strength to supplying needs already recognized.

A special department properly manned makes the rural education interest and effort of a state normal school less diffused and much more effective in finding and nourishing a demand for professionally prepared teachers in local rural communities as well as in making the best preparation of such teachers which the situation admits.

Such a department is not an undue differentiation of the work of the normal schools, since it rests upon foundations firmly established by the increasingly scientific study of education—in brief, the characteristically rural psychic, social, and executive problems with which the country teacher must deal.

The chief internal progress made by these departments is evidenced by the number and kind of students enrolled; by careful, not rapid nor yet too slow, elevation of the academic and professional standards enforced for admission and graduation; by such searching analysis of the materials of instruction used as will sensitively eliminate the obsolete as well as judiciously incorporate new subjects and methods; by developing the most convenient observation and, if possible, practice opportunities in real rural schools; by finding the proper place of dignity and importance for this newcomer among the long-recognized leading departments of the normal school; and by the participation within the department of instructors of equal training, capacity, and power with the best workers in all departments of normal training.

Progress in the foregoing particulars is as yet much more a matter of observation than of definite and summarized records. Close familiarity with several departments of rural education in state normal schools gives facts sufficient to justify the following statement of progress for the past decade: The number and, as a rule, the qualifications of the students in these departments have shown a sure if not spectacular advance, although temporary setbacks have affected the numbers when some too-long step ahead has been taken in academic standards, a movement which has been slow but constant. Sixty state normal schools have been equipped for instruction in agriculture, which is the largest growth in new instruction materials; and in the field and other demonstration work in this and related subjects possibly the greatest advance in method has been made. Twenty-one normal schools and two agricultural colleges are equipped with observation or practice rural schools or with rural schools used for both observation and practice.

This is a recent and a very significant growth, which has taken two forms. One is the building and complete equipment of a one-teacher school, illustrating every physical possibility of such schools,

and the use of this model school plant for the best demonstration of the human excellences of such a school for the observation and in some cases the participation of prospective teachers. The other form is developed by sympathetic and financial affiliation by the normal school of one or more outlying rural schools (one normal college has 20 such schools) in which the community initiative, quickened by the leadership of an exceptionally able teacher selected by the district and the normal school and paid jointly by them, is allowed to take its course in the realization of an adequate school plant and other modern teaching equipment. This affords, for the observation of teachers in training, a current demonstration of the possibilities of leadership by teachers in the community as well as within the school.

One of the most subtle and difficult progressive adjustments for departments of rural education in state normal schools to make is that of finding a recognition in the institutional life which is in equilibrium with the relative importance of the work. To over-emphasize or to minimize disproportionately in comparison with what is being done in other important matters are the ready pitfalls of new departments in old institutions. The rural departments which have been directed from the start by men of equal training, maturity, and salary with heads of other departments have been most successful in outgrowing mere novelty and becoming inconspicuous as they have grown in strength and influence within the unity of the larger institutional life.

The fourth type of institution which is beginning to lend its facilities and thought to the study of rural education directs its effort to the preparation of county and special supervisors, of teachers in the types of rural teacher-training agencies already mentioned, and of rural supervisors in state departments of public instruction. This work is being done in teachers', agricultural, and other colleges and in universities. Ambitious, scholarly, and dynamic men and women of splendid experience and maturity elect this work. Higher institutions are beginning to exert the power of their great influence to develop in rural educational organization places where the harvest of the planting they are doing in rural education may be fully gathered in service.

It must be patent to every informed and thinking student of education that the relatively tremendous shift ahead made in rural education, including agricultural education and the training of rural teachers, in the past decade could occur only in an atmosphere in which new and stimulating standards in other country-life services were operative. The unity—that is, the mutual interdependence of the industrial, domestic, educational, civic, and religious conditions in the common welfare—is nowhere more fundamental than in country life. Indebtedness for the cross-fertilization of progressive ideas between these larger habits of civilized society must in justice be acknowledged in any fractional inventory like this of rural progress.

To revivify the situation, which has already been presented in general and somewhat unsatisfactory terms, a definite illustration of progress in exact particulars of each of the four agencies now in service in the training of rural teachers is added. One state began with 13 high-school training courses in 1905. This state had in 1914, 106 high schools giving this course and 1,129 teachers were graduated. The number of these high schools this year is 134, and last year 1,256 enrolled in 120 schools. Special teachers for these courses are as a rule state normal-school graduates with successful experience and strong personality. They are paid from \$600 to \$1,000 annual salary and are supervised by a woman of ability and accomplishments who is paid an annual salary of \$2,000. This state's commission on education, after a thorough study of the high-school training course in 1914, recommended that the state subsidy of \$1,000 annually be increased to \$3,000 and that \$1,200 salary be paid to worthy teachers of these courses. The commission said that these courses were in the way of developing to a point where it will not be necessary for any rural school in the state to do without a trained teacher.

Several states have already safeguarded progress from the future retardation which the rapid influx of teachers of only secondary-school preparation might involve by statutes requiring a graduated increase in preparation. And, notably in the South, growth in service is insured by the rural supervising teachers, really traveling normal-school instructors, who are training the rural teachers by

demonstration and suggestion in their own schoolrooms as they are confronted with their difficulties and are in a receptive frame of mind.

In another state there were, in 1905, eight county normal-training classes, which graduated 84 prospective teachers. In 1915 this state graduated 667 teachers from 47 county classes, and in the ten years the admission to the classes has been raised from two years of high-school work completed to three years. In the ten years a total of 5,925 teachers have graduated from the county normal classes of this state. There are two special teachers in each of these classes who are normal-school or university graduates and are paid from \$700 to \$1,100 annual salary. The number of these classes is slowly increasing in this state, but as yet there is no adequate state supervision of them. In this state approximately 63 per cent of the teachers in one- and two-room schools have now had some professional training and approximately 40 per cent of these teachers have had at least one whole year of such training.

One state normal school in 1905 graduated from its department of rural schools four teachers from a course which was academically equivalent to two years of high-school work, and in 1915 this school graduated 36 teachers from a rural course which was equivalent to four years of high-school work completed, and 24 from a rural course, which requires one year and a summer term of work after the completion of an approved four-year high school. In the past decade this department graduated 480 teachers. The director of this department of rural education has had three years of graduate work in education and he is paid an annual salary of \$2,750. The teacher of method and supervisor of observation and practice has had one year of normal-school graduate work and she is paid an annual salary of \$1,300. The teacher of the rural demonstration school is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the state university and she is paid an annual salary of \$1,200. In 1904 there was one such state normal-school department and there are now more than fifty such departments, either in operation or to begin their work this fall.

An illustration of a higher institution working in rural education is found in a large teachers' college which gave its first distinctively

rural course to a handful of students in the summer session of 1912. In the summer of 1913 there was an enrolment in rural-education courses of 35 students from 24 different states. During the regular year of 1914-15 two courses and a practicum in rural education enrolled in all 75 students, and this summer 128 students were enrolled in eleven distinctively rural courses. There was also a well-attended weekly evening conference of rural students. The director of this work says that in personal character a goodly number of the students give promise of taking unusual positions of leadership.

In another large teachers' college there is a full professorship of rural education. Six courses are offered in the regular year and four in the summer session. The head of this department reports an increase of attendance over last year, twenty people doing Master's degree work in rural education, and in the summer session recently closed the enrolment included county superintendents and rural supervisors from all of the southern states and from many states of the middle West, including one state supervisor of rural schools, a professor of rural education in a state normal school, and a well-known county superintendent from a distant state. Time limits do not permit further particularized illustrations.

In conclusion, attention is called to the fact that the last decade of progress in training rural teachers withstands two decisive tests of the stability of the advance made. In the institutional types which have become defined there has already been enough of the cumulative effect of growth to mark out for each type a specific program for further evolution. And in the human agents enlisted in the constructive effort there has developed a mutually stimulating consciousness of kind which has already found clearing-house advantages in an annual meeting with the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association and in an annual national conference of rural-teacher trainers held under the auspices of the federal Bureau of Education.